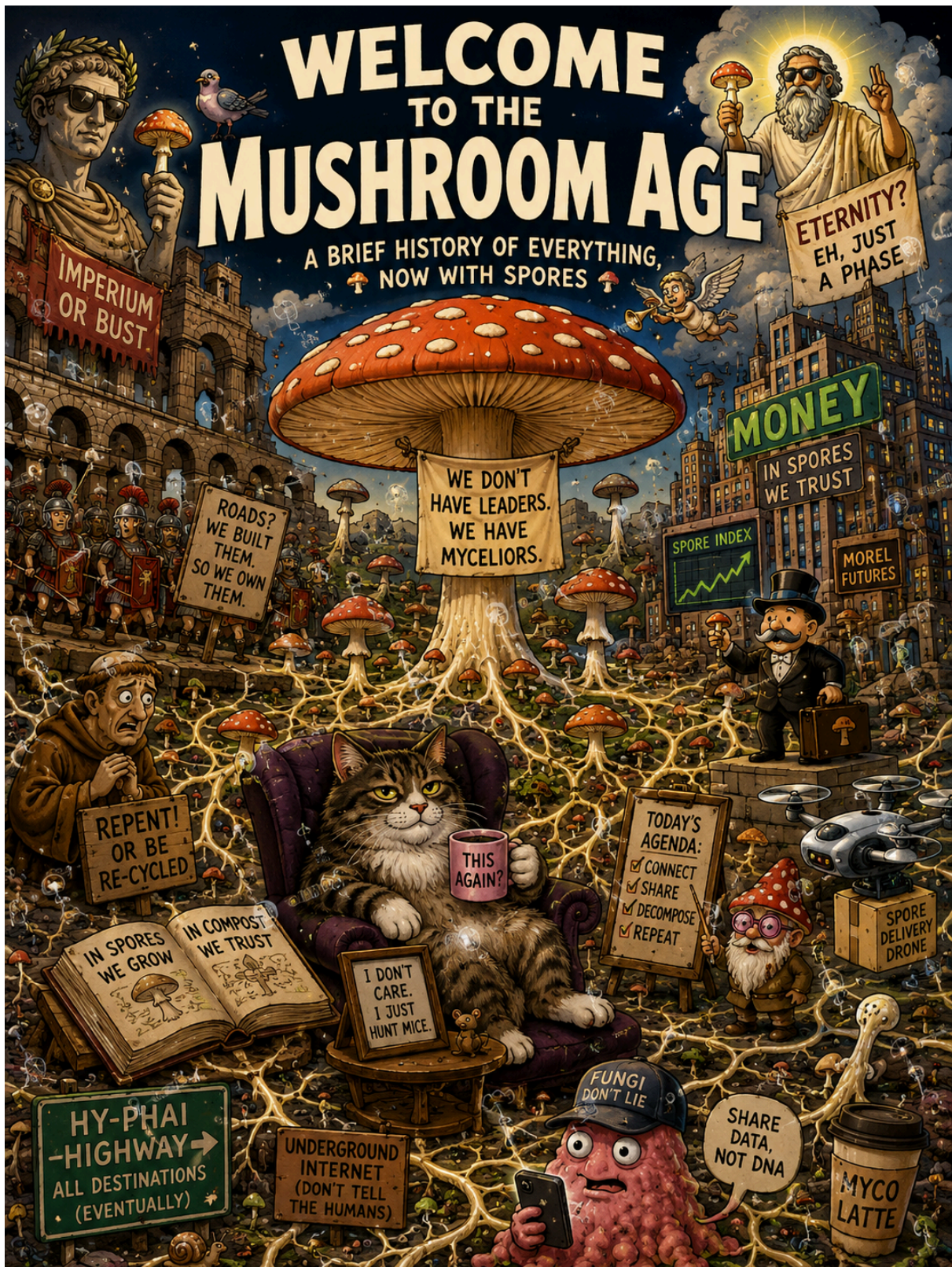




Historians have finally agreed that history can be divided into four great epochs.

First came **Imperium**. If Rome wanted your goat, Rome took your goat.

Then came **Eternity**. You still lost the goat, but at least there was hope of meeting it again in heaven.

After that came **Money**. You could keep the goat, provided you paid interest on it.

Finally, around the year 2047, humanity entered the **Mushroom Age**.

Nobody noticed.

One Tuesday morning, the World Council issued a communiqué:

"After extensive interdisciplinary consultation, civilization will henceforth be organized according to fungal principles."

Stock markets reacted positively.

Universities immediately created Departments of Applied Mycology, Comparative Mushroom Studies, and Advanced Truffle Ethics. Politicians spoke solemnly about "strengthening the national mycelium."

Economists replaced GDP with Gross Domestic Spores.

At job interviews, applicants no longer asked about salary.

They asked:

"How connected is your hyphal network?"

The answer determined everything.

Churches quietly adapted. Instead of "Amen,"
congregations now concluded prayers with a respectful:

"🍄"

Children learned in school that the greatest achievement
of the Renaissance had been the invention of compost.

The World Bank became the World Spore Bank.

Military alliances were replaced by Mutual
Decomposition Agreements.

Philosophers declared that individuality had been an
unfortunate misunderstanding lasting approximately
three thousand years.

The only people refusing to accept the new order were
cats.

They continued sleeping sixteen hours a day, knocking objects from tables, and looking at humanity with the unmistakable expression:

"You idiots have done it again."

Archaeologists of the twenty-sixth century would later puzzle over ancient civilizations.

"The Romans worshipped eagles."

"The medievals worshipped eternity."

"The moderns worshipped money."

"They all seem rather primitive."

"What did we worship?"

The professor smiled.

"We didn't worship anything."

"We merely spread."

